

At a meeting of a large number of Medical Gentlemen and Students, held in Dr. BEDFORD's Lecture Room, November 26, 1835, Mr. W. H. WILSON, of Charleston, S. C., was called to the Chair, and Mr. LORING D. CHAPIN, of New York, appointed Secretary.

The object of the Meeting having been stated by the Chair, the Secretary offered and read the following preamble and resolution, which, on motion of Dr. De Rose, being separately considered, were afterwards unanimously adopted.

#### PREAMBLE.

Whereas we feel a lively interest in the present state and prospects of Medical Science and of Medical Education in this country, and particularly in this city;—and whereas the latter seems not to have kept pace with the reasonable expectations of its friends, with the demands, the resources and population of our city; but strangely and lamentably to have dwindled into insignificance and disrepute, from causes which we think ought to be more generally known to the public:

*Therefore be it Resolved*, That the exposition of these causes, and the sentiments expressed upon this subject by Dr. G. S. BEDFORD, in his late Public Address at Clinton Hall, meet with our concurrence and hearty approbation, and that Dr. Bedford be requested to furnish us with a copy of that Address for publication.

On motion of Dr. Hulse, the following gentlemen, viz: Messrs. Abr'm Creveling, Wm. A. Butler, and Wm. Bowen, were appointed a Committee to communicate to Dr. Bedford the sense of the Meeting, and to confer with him relative to the object of the resolution.

On motion of Dr. Blain, the Chairman and Secretary were added to this Committee. The Meeting then adjourned.

WM. H. WILSON, Chairman.

LORING D. CHAPIN, Secretary.

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At a subsequent Meeting, the foregoing Committee reported the following correspondence.

New York, Nov. 23, 1835.

Dr. BEDFORD,—

Sir:—In the discharge of the duty with which we have been honored as a Committee from the Students attending your Lectures, we respectfully solicit of you, in their behalf, a copy of your recent Lecture at Clinton Hall, for publication.

We herewith present you with a copy of the Minutes of the Meeting, together with the Preamble and Resolution which were then adopted, and from which the undersigned Committee have emanated.

The Committee will be happy to hear from you upon this subject as early as it may suit your convenience.

Respectfully, your obed't serv'ts,

WM. H. WILSON,  
LORING D. CHAPIN,  
ABR'M. CREVELING,  
WM. S. BOWEN,  
WILLIAM A. BUTLER.

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New York, Nov. 23, 1835.

GENTLEMEN:—

Your polite note requesting, in behalf of your fellow students, a copy of my Introductory Lecture for publication, has just been handed to me; and I lose no time in replying to it. The Lecture was written with a view to subserve your interests, and if you think its publication will tend to effect this object, you are at liberty to dispose of it as you may judge best.

I beg of you to accept for yourselves and fellow students, the assurance of my best wishes.

Very truly,

Your friend and servant,

G. S. BEDFORD.

To Messrs.

WM. H. WILSON,  
LORING D. CHAPIN,  
ABR'M. CREVELING,  
WM. BOWEN,  
WM. A. BUTLER, } Committee.



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Whereupon a Committee of gentlemen from the Meeting were appointed to carry into immediate effect the design embraced by the resolution, and the Meeting adjourned.

95-1860

## ADDRESS.

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GENTLEMEN:—

When I last had the honor of addressing you, I did so with feelings vastly different from those with which I now appear before you. Without laying any claim to the spirit of prophecy, I had anticipated a change in our medical laws, which would have saved the credit of the state, reflected honor upon its legislature, and protected the best interests of Science. I had ardently cherished the belief that the experience of past years would have enlightened the public mind on the propriety of some enactments, by which the dignity of the Medical Profession might be sustained, and its character preserved against the encroachments of intrigue. I relied, too, for this hope on the good sense of the people, on the honesty of the members of the Faculty, and, mainly, on the necessity which was every where felt for reform. Notwithstanding these flattering anticipations, I grieve—yes, for Science and my country I grieve to say, that we have done the last year what we have been steadily doing for the last ten years : we have retrograded rather than advanced. The enterprise of our citizens has accomplished much for the state of New York ; our commerce is extending—our foreign relations are becoming important to our transatlantic brethren—our city is now attracting

attention in Europe, on account of its rapid and prosperous growth—our population is increasing in wealth and respectability; in a word, the tide of emigration from all parts of Europe now setting towards this city, and the heavy investments which are yearly made by foreign capitalists, form in my mind a strong argument to show that we are destined to become a great and powerful people. If, as our talented and eloquent countryman, Patrick Henry, observed, “the wealth of a nation consists in its population,” then the day is not far distant when we shall have both riches and strength. The city of New York being, in wealth, enterprise, and population, the first on this continent, becomes, as it were, responsible for our national character. The intelligent and learned in Europe will naturally look to New York for data on which to rest their opinions of our progress in the sciences. The state of literature will be compared with what it is elsewhere; a rigid inquiry will be made into our resources, and just opinions formed of the good we have derived from them. In other departments of science we may furnish undoubted proofs of excellence; but it will be my purpose, in the present lecture, to prove that we are unpardonably deficient in all that appertains to the profession of Medicine.

The spirit of improvement is abroad—the best energies of the human intellect are at work—the medical philosophers of Europe are now deeply engaged in the prosecution of science—an honest rivalry stimulates them to renewed exertion. They do not suffer the object, which they propose to themselves, to be defeated by the petty

jealousies to which the infirmities of our nature are so obnoxious. Their motto is Truth and Science. By establishing the one, they necessarily elevate the other. Who that has cast his eyes across the ocean, and reflected for a moment on the vast amount of intellectual labor accomplished by the philosophers of France, England, and Germany—who, I say, can view these things, and not exclaim, this age is, indeed, most auspicious to the advancement of Medical Science? It is our fortune, gentlemen, to live in an age which has exceeded all others in the vigor and devotion with which medical literature is prosecuted; and it has been suggested—such is the zeal with which the various departments of Medicine are now studied—that in fifty years there will be nothing left to be done by those destined to succeed us. History informs us of the rapid progress made by other countries in the development of the healing art; and personal observation has furnished many of us with ample testimony in regard to the untiring industry and honorable competition of the French and English Schools. Those of you who have visited continental Europe, and witnessed the extraordinary efforts made in behalf of Science, must have been forcibly struck with the difference, as contrasted with the manner in which the science of medicine is taught and pursued within the limits of this flourishing metropolis.

In Europe, the entire system of teaching appears to have been established for two great objects—the one to benefit the pupil, the other to elicit from every member of the Faculty an ambition to excel. With us, the in-

terest of the pupil is made subservient to that of the preceptor ; and all ambition among aspirants after the high places in our profession is completely paralyzed by corruption and intrigue. If the ground I have just assumed be correct—and that I shall succeed in proving it to demonstration before I conclude this discourse, I pledge myself—if this ground, I repeat, be correct, then it is manifest why the city of New York occupies so low a place in the long catalogue of medical institutions throughout the civilized world.

There can be nothing more important to the student of medicine, when he commences his pupilage, than the inquiry which he is bound to make respecting the character and ability of those who are to become his future instructors. If, in a moral point of view, it be incumbent on him to examine with scrupulous care into the pretensions of his teachers, it is no less necessary, in a pecuniary sense, that he should use all proper diligence to procure the best instruction the country can afford.—The object of every one who commences the study of Medicine is, to pursue it either as an accomplishment, or with a view to minister to the wants of suffering humanity. In the latter case, it becomes imperative that he should be accurately instructed in the various departments of his profession ; for, on his knowledge may depend the lives of thousands. How often has it happened that the best talents have been wasted, and genius itself prostrated, by the indifference and neglect of those whose business it was to foster and protect it? *Educate the people*, is the language of the day ; and the time, I

believe, has arrived when students of medicine will require justice for wrongs so long inflicted upon them. Let what will be said, I do contend that the rights of the students have of late not been sufficiently respected; their advancement has not been considered a matter of paramount importance by those into whose hands the laws of the state have committed them. Selfishness, that insuperable barrier to a free and generous dispensation of human privileges, has interposed, and deprived the student of what he is most justly entitled to. Is this right? Does it accord with the spirit of our institutions? Nay, is it not in open violation of one of the fundamental declarations of our glorious constitution, "that all men are born equal"? If all men be "born equal," the natural, the irresistible inference is, that the doctrine of EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS should be inoperative.

To monopolize teaching, is to destroy all ambition. To say that the favored few shall alone enjoy this privilege, is at once a check to all intellectual industry in our profession. I use the term *favored*, and I wish it to be understood in its literal acceptance; for, according to the present mode of granting Professorships in this city, it is favor, and not merit, which secures the object of the candidate. Under these circumstances, positive as are the laws respecting the requisitions of pupils before receiving the Doctorate, there must necessarily be wrong done not only to the student but to the community. Let us, for a moment, analyze this point, for it is one in which your interests, students of medicine, are seriously involved. It is one, too, involving the lives and happiness of our



fellow-citizens. What is the law of this state touching the requirements made of students before being admitted to an examination for the degree of Doctor of Medicine? It would be idle in me to read this law to you ; for there is scarcely one of you who has not often read it in the bitterness of his heart, feeling, as every freeman should feel, that its direct tendency is to disfranchise him of a right which no American citizen should freely yield—a right to judge and choose for himself. This law imposes on you, gentlemen, whether you will or not, the necessity of attending at least one full course of lectures in one of the Medical Colleges in this state, before you can be empowered to practise your profession under the title of *Medicinæ Doctor*. You are bound, at the peril of violating the law, and of being visited by its severe penalties, either to pay your money into the exchequer of one of these institutions, or to quit your native state, inconvenient as it may be, and seek instruction elsewhere. But it may be asked, in what consists the hardship of the law to which I allude ; how does it conflict with the interests or rights of the student? If there be any here who are ignorant of the oppressive part of the system, I shall plainly tell them how it operates to the disadvantage of the student, and the discredit of the state. The law, as I before remarked, absolutely requires all candidates for the degree of Doctor of Medicine, to attend at least one full course of lectures in one of the state colleges: and for these lectures the student is obliged to pay certain moneys which, in some instances, may constitute his entire legacy. The dark feature in this law is,



that an individual should be compelled to do what often his judgment cannot approve. How are these colleges provided with instructors? What evidence is there of ability or competency in the men empowered to teach? Where is the evidence to be found; where shall we seek for it? Is it that the *manner* of appointing them guarantees a confidence in their capability? If it were altogether a question of merit; if the individual were required to afford undoubted proof of his qualifications; if, in a word, it were an acknowledged fact that he was the best man in the country for his particular department, then, I admit, the guarantee to the student would be perfect. But are such the facts? Is it true that the only question which engages the attention of the appointing power, is the actual merit of the candidate who sues for elevation? Would that such in truth were the case; then I should be spared the labor of my present task, and the College in the city of New York would stand among the most celebrated in the world.

The Medical Schools in this state are furnished with Professors by men to whom is delegated the power of appointing; and these men not belonging to the profession, it consequently follows, that they have no opportunity of estimating the relative merits of the various candidates. To the Regents\* is committed the sacred trust of providing Students of Medicine with capable teach-

\*I would, in the most respectful manner, call the attention of the Regents to the present alarming condition of their College in this city. There is a spirit of dissatisfaction now manifesting itself among the pupils, which, if their grievances be not attended to, will soon burst out in a flame that cannot be stayed. *Verbum Sat.*

ers ; and a more responsible trust, I apprehend, can scarcely be imagined. The responsibility of this trust extends not only to the student—it reaches the very bosom of the community.

The Regents, constituted as they are by law the sole judges of a candidate's fitness, and alone enjoying the right of elevating him to the important office of teaching, should at least be vested with some means of ascertaining his merit, so that the public interest may be subserved by his appointment. It unfortunately is too true—the fact cannot be denied, and it may as well be proclaimed—that the politics of the applicant, and the good he can do or has done for the party dominant, are far greater recommendations to the good will of the Regents, than the intrinsic merit he may possess. I do not wish to be understood as taking any part in the political strife of the day, nor do I charge any one party in preference to another with favoritism ; but what I mean to say is simply this—that so long as the high places in our profession are in the gift of a political body, so long will the interests of Science be lost sight of, and its dignity prostituted to the base purposes of party. It is a principle replete with danger to the existence of this republic, that a political demagogue should be rewarded for his labor by having braided on his brow a garland with which nature never intended he should be decorated.

It may be urged that the politics of the candidate have not always been the means of securing him his situation. I am not disposed to deny that it may frequently have happened that other causes conspired to effect his appoint-

ment; but if any cause, save his actual merit, should have brought about the consummation of his wishes, then the objection is still untouched. Whether it be politics, wealth, family influence, truckling, or low cunning, to which the candidate can ascribe his success, the evil is still the same—the community is trifled with, and the rights of the student most flagrantly neglected. The law compels the pupil, under the peril of a severe penalty, to seek instruction in one of the State Colleges; then, in the name of all that is just and equitable, does it not devolve on the legislature to see that proper instruction is provided? In the ordinary transactions of life, in our business pursuits, in all our negotiations, it is an admitted rule, that the vender should receive an equivalent for his goods; and the purchaser, too, has the same right to expect a proper return for any moneys he may expend. This is the common law of society—it constitutes one of the elements of our commercial existence. Now, if this be true—and it is too plain to the sense of every man to be for a moment controverted—if this be true, why should not the Student\* of Medicine demand the same fair dealing towards himself which is so freely dispensed to all other members of society? Why, I again ask, should the Student of Medicine be singled

\*Of the small number of pupils now attending Lectures in Barclay street, I unhesitatingly believe, that four-fifths would instantly abandon the leaky vessel, (if left to their own free will,) and fly, as if from contagion, to Philadelphia. I trust I may not be doubted, when I state that I have conversed freely with students on this subject, and without a dissenting voice, the cry is “we have been deceived in our estimate of the College, but we have spent our money, and must remain.”

out and made the sport of intrigue ; why should his interest be sacrificed, when the rights of every other citizen are fully respected ? It is time that the students should rise in their sovereign capacity, and burst the fetters that have so long enchained them. Let them, in this land of liberty and of universal privilege, assert their claims, and prove to the world that they are not unmindful of what becomes them as men, holding the proud title of American citizen. Let them no longer tolerate a system of things which will inevitably lead to their disgrace, and the utter destruction of Medical Science in this great state. But how is this to be effected ? How are the students to insist upon a new order of things ? By tumult and disorder ? No ! By insult and clamor ? No ! By open resistance to the law ? *Never !*

There is a simple and infallible mode of removing the heavy restrictions under which you are placed. It is to enter into a sacred pledge to attend no institution, the Professors of which shall have been elected on any other ground than that of their own individual merit. Resolve unanimously, that before you will consent to patronize any set of men, they must have first afforded you some evidence of their ability, other than that which grows out of the simple fact of their being in possession of a professorial chair.\* Do this, gentlemen, and my word for it, you will soon elevate the character of Medical Science ; you will, beyond all doubt, confer an in-

\*If the pupils approve of this advice, and should be governed by it in their conduct, then they can laugh to scorn the power as at present vested in the Board of Regents.

valuable good upon society, and you will erect for yourselves a monument valuable beyond all price. It is time that you should know the power you possess. It is your money which is to support the Medical Schools of this state. Without your patronage, these establishments must of necessity close their doors;\* and, as you are the persons most deeply interested in the internal organization of these schools, you will be justified, in the eyes of all intelligent men, in demanding a change in the mode of appointing your instructors. Upon the competency of your teachers will depend the accuracy of your knowledge. You are to look upon them as fit to guide you in the study of your profession. You are to imbibe from them the principles of a science, which, when properly understood, will enable you to confer infinite blessings on your fellow men.

In your heroic attempt at reform, you will have the spirit of the age with you ; the best wishes of this community will attend you ; and, if you succeed in the attainment of your laudable object, you will receive the heartfelt benedictions of those who are to succeed you in the walks of the profession.

It is now for you to say whether or not a change in the affairs of the profession is at all needed at this time. Is the condition of Medical Science with us *such* as to satisfy every one, who would wish to see the city of New York foremost in the race for honor and distinction ?

\*There is, I apprehend, but little probability of a money grant to Barclay street College, from the legislature, no matter how fervently it may be solicited.

Does the state of the College in Barclay street call for action on the part of those most immediately interested in its prosperity—the students? These three interrogatories press upon us at this stage of the argument; and I state my opinion with the fullest confidence, that if the question were to be decided by vote, it would be carried by almost unanimous acclamation. Is not the miserable condition of the profession in this city the common topic of conversation among all intelligent men? Is it not admitted on all hands—yes, the very friends of the institution cannot deny the fact—is it not, I ask, admitted that the Medical College in Barclay street has nearly run its race;\* its sands are exhausted, and it is now regarded

\*This result was predicted years ago. As soon as the narrow views of some of the incumbents of the State College were made public, it required but little sagacity to say what would be the fate of a school which depended exclusively for its success upon legislative power. Some of the gentlemen, now Professors in Barclay street, will remember the opposition they arrayed against the Faculty of Rutgers' Medical College, in this city. When the Faculty of that institution applied to the legislature for a charter, the Barclay street gentlemen remonstrated; and this was their argument,—“*If you charter Rutgers' College, you will destroy us!*” Another scientific objection urged by the friends of the Regents' School was this—“*If you permit two Medical Colleges to exist in the city of New York, the number of subjects required for dissection, will produce a carnivorous atmosphere, destructive to the health of the citizens!!!*” Thus it was that the prejudices of the people were invoked against such men as Mott, Godman, Hosack, Francis, Macneven, and Griscom; men who were an honor to their country, and who, notwithstanding they could not grant legal degrees, attracted a larger class than the Regents' Faculty has done at any period since the “quo warranto” act of the legislature against the Rutgers' College.

With all the disadvantages under which the Rutgers' Faculty labored; with legal restrictions; with the unceasing influence of the State College against them, the very season the legislature required them to close their doors, they did so with one hundred and sixty pupils on their register!!! I have no hesitation in saying, that if a charter had been granted to the



as a tottering fabric, which must speedily tumble to the earth. It is sinking under the pressure of its own infirmities. Am I in error? Do I assert what cannot be established by facts? There is not one listening to me who does not feel the truth of my observations; and, if he be not terrified at the recollection of the *green-room*—that certain check to the free expression of opinion among medical students—there is not an individual here who will not readily vindicate me from the charge of aspersion. With all the advantages for the establishment of a great Medical School; with hospitals, dispensaries, alms-houses, private infirmaries; with a population of 250,000 souls; with extraordinary facilities for surgical practice and the prosecution of anatomical dissections; in a word, with the numberless attractions presenting themselves to students, the College in the city of New York the last winter did not register as many students as one of our provincial schools. The College at Fairfield, not enjoying one hundredth part the advantages of this city, numbered far more pupils than Barclay street. The Medical School at Pittsfield, in Massachusetts, is in a more flourishing state than the College of this city. I scarcely know where to turn my eye, and not find an institution in a more prosperous condition than the College of Physicians and Surgeons

Faculty of Rutgers' College—there would at this moment be five hundred Medical students in the city, and the Professors of Barclay street would years since have been spared the trouble of reading their lectures.

Thus we see how much these gentlemen have been benefited by an ungenerous opposition to their professional brethren, in their attempt to establish a College which would have redeemed the character of our city, and established Medicine in this state on a respectable basis.



of the city of New York. Now, there must be some reason for this ; some cause must exist ; and it requires no very great penetration to detect it.

The attention of medical students has, for years past, been directed to Philadelphia. The University of Pennsylvania may well be styled the Metropolitan College of America : its medical department is the oldest, and its attractions have been acknowledged by the young men of our country, who have flocked to its walls to receive instruction. The names of its past and present professors form a brilliant galaxy on the page of American history ; and when we recur to the character of these men, we at once see a reason for the proud success which has attended their labors. They have, by their united efforts, erected a College, which reflects honor on their country, and gives to the American physician abroad a character which he otherwise would not possess. The names of Rush, Wistar, and Dorsey are alone sufficient to elevate the standing of the Pennsylvania University. With these names is associated nothing but honor ; and we venerate them for the good they have done in Medicine, as we do the name of our illustrious Washington for the achievement of our liberty. The gentlemen now engaged in giving instruction in Philadelphia, are no less distinguished for talent and learning than were their predecessors. The names of Physic and Horner are identified with the progress of Surgery and Anatomy in this country : their authority is received in Europe with great respect, and they are cited by the best medical scholars in a manner highly creditable to the

school, to which they are daily adding new lustre. Of the ingenious Hare it is hardly necessary to say any thing, for his fame has spread throughout the world, and his valuable contributions to Chemistry are fully appreciated. Chapman and Jackson, the two eloquent Professors of Practice and the Institutes of Medicine, would adorn any institution with which they might be connected. Gibson is universally acknowledged to be one of the most successful teachers of Surgery now living. His fame is not confined to his native country; it has reached the shores of Europe, where it has spoken loudly in behalf of Surgical Science in America.\* There is yet one name to be mentioned—a name of which our country should be proud—a name familiar to every student in the obscurest medical school in Europe: I speak of Dewees, who has done enough to allow him to descend to the grave covered with honors, and cherished in the hearts of his countrymen as a public benefactor. That industrious man has done much for Medical Science; and he has greatly enriched the particular department to which he has chiefly devoted himself. His work on Obstetric Medicine is not only in the hands of every one here, it is not only considered a guide of great practical value, but it is found in every library throughout

\* We must not forget the name of our Mott—a name second to none in the annals of Surgery. Drs. Mott and Stevens are the Professors of Surgery in the Barclay street College, and better men are not to be found in the country; but, unfortunately, it requires something more than one or two stars to constitute a Faculty. It may be considered presumptuous in me, but I hazard the opinion, that these two gentlemen will not suffer their high character to be compromised by any further connexion with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of this city.

Medical Europe. It has been translated into almost all the living languages, and its merit, as a book of truth, is universally admitted.

I should be doing great injustice, were I not to mention another Institution in Philadelphia—Jefferson Medical College—which promises to be among the most distinguished, I will not say in this country, but in the world. The triumphant success of this school has far exceeded the hopes of its most sanguine friends. Having commenced under circumstances the most adverse—and being obliged in its very infancy to breast the storm of prejudice and persecution, it was reasonable to suppose that many years would elapse before it could rival its neighbor, the University of Pennsylvania. But such men as Pattison, McClellan, and Revere—gifted as they are with minds of a high order, and most devotedly attached to their profession—were not to be intimidated. They buckled on their armor, and entered the battle-field, full of hope and courage, determined either to sustain their school, or sacrifice themselves in the attempt.\*

But am I not excursive? Have I not lost sight of the subject of my discourse? It may be so imagined by those who are not familiar with the state of Medicine in this city, and who have never attempted to account for the astounding fact that, among the numerous medical

\* There are, during the present session, 367 bona-fide students attending Jefferson Medical College. In the session of 1832—3, there were 96; 1833—4, 172; 1834—5, 233; and in 1835, 6, Jefferson College registers (exclusive of alumni and occasional visitors) 367 students!!! This increase is without a parallel.

institutions in America, the College of Physicians and Surgeons in the city of New York is positively one of the least attractive. I this moment remarked that the University of Pennsylvania was the oldest, and likewise the most celebrated Medical School on this continent. It would be well for us to inquire the cause of its renown. Let us ascertain, if possible, what it is that has contributed to establish its reputation. Are we to ascribe its success to its location? Is it on account of the great population of Philadelphia? If so, it is strange that the same causes should produce such opposite effects in the two cities of Philadelphia and New York. Can it be that the University of Pennsylvania owes its success to its great age? If so, it is unaccountable to me that the College of Physicians and Surgeons in this city—which certainly can lay some claim to antiquity—should be so far behind its parent institution. No! it is neither to one nor the other of the causes to which I have just alluded, that we are to refer the celebrity of the Philadelphia school. I have just given you a brief outline of the gentlemen who now have the control of that institution, and whom the public hold responsible for the perpetuation of its high name; and, in reviewing the character of its able Professors, you at once perceive a reason for the enviable reputation enjoyed by the Pennsylvania University. What is it, I would ask, that fills you all with enthusiasm, when you speak of the Medical School in Paris? What is it that inspires you with a longing desire to visit the Medical Institutions of Edinburgh, London, and Dublin? How happens

it that, after having studied in these schools, you return home enamored of your profession, and anxious to protect it against the encroachments of ignorance and empiricism? Is it not that you have experienced the fruits of valuable instruction; that you have tested the incomparable benefit of having public institutions governed and conducted by men of admitted talent and acquirement? The road to eminence in Great Britain, and especially in France, is straight and undeviating. No man, though admitting the possibility of his receiving the appointment, can continue to hold a Professorship\* one single hour after his incompetency is discovered. The pupils in France are, in the most positive manner, protected against the triumph of party. The French government—feeling as it did the urgent necessity there was for an order of things by which the public health might be secured, and the cause of Science sustained—established the *Concours*, assuredly one of the strongest checks to the growth of intrigue and management. The object of the *Concours* is to encourage industry, foster talent, and reward with the highest honors the successful student. Every man in France feels that the avenue to distinction is thrown open to him; and if he fail in reaching the goal, it is because there is another better and more worthy than himself. The School of Medicine in Paris, and every hospital in

\* His lecture-room would be immediately abandoned, and he left to discourse with the bare walls. The time will arrive, too, when American students will have recourse to similar measures to rid themselves of an *incubus*—what, indeed, every Professor must be considered, who is inadequate to the discharge of his duties.

that enlightened metropolis, is filled by a trial at *Concours*; and I do not hesitate to affirm, that the high character which France has attained in Medicine is to be attributed solely to the establishment of a system, by which every individual is rewarded precisely in proportion to what he has proved he deserves. A question has often presented itself to my mind, which has no doubt repeatedly occurred to yourselves. Those of you familiar with French Medicine, or, in other words, those of you accustomed to keep pace, as far as circumstances will permit, with the medical literature of France, must have frequently inquired—how happens it that, amidst the number of authors who are yearly issuing works of immense value from the French press, the great majority are to be found among the young men of the Profession? You cannot show me a country in the world, which can boast of the attainments of her young medical men equal to what France can do. There are those present whose faces are familiar—some of my own fellow students in Paris—who can corroborate my assertion, that the ardor of the junior members of the profession in France is beyond all parallel. There are those here who have attended with delight, and with profit too, the lectures delivered in what is called the *Ecole pratique*. What is the *Ecole pratique*? It is the first step to honor in the Medical Profession; it is a school subordinate to the University—and was originally established for what purpose? Why, gentlemen, in order that industry might be rewarded, and merit receive its full honor. The lectures in that in-



stitution are delivered by young men, who are placed there, after having complied with the necessary requisitions, in order that they may, when a vacancy occurs, enter into an intellectual struggle for a Professorship in the University. How does an individual gain admittance into the *Ecole pratique*? Is it by the strength of friendly recommendations? Is it by his politics? Is it by his wealth? Is it by intrigue? No! It is the result of a moral conviction, felt and admitted, that he merits the situation—it is that he is subjected to a trial, the severity of which would palsy the hearts of those who would fain imagine the mere possession of a Professorship, no matter how obtained, sufficient for their purposes. I have had the honor of witnessing several *Concours* in France; and shall I tell you—on beholding their admirable effects on Science—how my heart beat with delight at the very hope that this system might one day be introduced into our country! Yes, for hours have I sat, and been amazed at the rigor of the trials to which the candidates for Professorships were subjected. Have you any idea of what is meant by the *Concours*? Why its very name, methinks, is calculated to strike terror into the heart of any man, who felt that he was not qualified to discharge the duties of his chair. *Dupuytren*, who has left behind him an imperishable name, was obliged to *concour*. *Lisfranc*, *Velpeau*, *Capuron*, *Dubois*, *Bouillaud*, *Bichat* and *Bec-lard*, those bright stars of their country, were all subjected to the severity of this trial. You may form some idea of what the Institution is, when I tell you that



Velpeau has several times *failed*. Velpeau, though young, is among the most distinguished of his countrymen; and yet, notwithstanding all that he has done, notwithstanding he is universally admitted to be a man of great acquirements, he *failed* at the *Concours*—and why? because there was one better than he. Lisfranc, who now stands at the head of the long list of brilliant surgeons in France, once failed before the assembled judges. I know not, gentlemen, what your opinion may be, but I candidly acknowledge that I should consider a failure among such men sufficient glory for me.

Will any one question the excellence of the *Concours*, as conducted in France? If you are doubtful of its effects on Medical Science, look for a moment at the state of the profession in France, and compare it, as you find it there, with what it is in other countries. Compare it, for example, with the profession in the city of New York. In Paris, the Professors of the University are required to give unequivocal proof of their merit before receiving their appointment; they are compelled to repair to a tribunal, before which they undergo the most scrutinizing examination; their knowledge is brought out, and nicely weighed in the scales of justice. Each candidate's claims are spread out broadly before the public; and, after a severe inquisition, the honor of the appointment is conferred on the one who has satisfied the judges, by his own unassisted efforts, that he is more worthy than his competitors. In Paris, where this system prevails, we find every thing which the most ambitious in his profession could possibly desire. In

New York,\* where a different system is countenanced, we find a corresponding difference in the results.

We can at once account for the enthusiasm so apparent among young medical men in the French capital—we see a reason for their zeal. Every individual in France, when he commences the study of Medicine, feels the inspiring conviction, that success in his profession will depend on his own exertions—he is to be the maker of his own fortune, and he has a moral certainty of receiving full compensation for his industry. He knows that the *Concours* will be thrown open to him, and that a fair opportunity will be afforded of measuring strength with his competitors. No extrinsic circumstances will be suffered to operate against him; no influence, but that which is the result of his own merit, can be employed to further his wishes. Poverty is no barrier to eminence in France. Before the assembled judges of the *Concours*, the wealth of the candidate, and the influence it might otherwise obtain for him, wither into nothingness—he stands prepared for the fight, stripped of every adventitious aid; depending for success solely on the resources of his mind.

How different is the state of the profession with us! Here there is no *Concours*—we have no tribunal before which our medical men are permitted to appear, and give evidence of their superiority. If a vacancy occur in one of the Colleges in this state, the fact is scarcely announced—it is a matter well understood, that, gene-

\* I do not believe there is a city in the civilized world, possessing one tenth the population of New York, in which the profession of Medicine is in such a degraded state as it is with us. The very title of "Doctor," seems to bear disgrace with it. No man, if he will judge from facts, will deny this.

rally speaking, it will be filled by some one who has done service to the state ; not by promoting Science, but by aiding the party in power. This being the condition of things with us, it needs no argument to show why medical literature has declined, and the practice of the profession reduced to a trade. The students feel no ambition to excel, for they know their intrinsic merit will never be taken into account, when honors are to be conferred. Notwithstanding our state of dependence for professional elevation in this city, and the necessity there is of cringing to the parties in power, I glory to say there are yet a few among us who would scorn as a gift, what they felt they could not demand as a right.

I have proved—and I think satisfactorily—that the College in this city exists only in name. I have shown that we possess on this island all the elements for the establishment of a great School of Medicine—and now the question arises, *ought not something to be done to remove the stigma so long fixed upon us ?\** The College in this city should be considered a fair representation of the state of the Faculty—and if an individual were to form his estimate of our medical character generally, from the celebrity of our school, it strikes me that, as a body, we should present rather a homely picture.

\*It is time the Profession should move in this matter. Something must be done, and speedily too, to save us from disgrace. Would it not be well to call a public meeting to discuss the subject—not forgetting to invite the friends of Barelay street College, in order that they may have an opportunity of defending themselves? I would suggest that we select from among the Profession fifty gentlemen—twenty-five of whom are friendly to the College, and twenty-five opposed to it—and that they be constituted judges to decide upon the merits of the question, after listening to the discussion by the friends of both parties. And further, if forty-nine of the fifty judges do not decide against the College, that we bind ourselves never more to moot the subject of reform.

The citizens of New York are more deeply interested in the discussion of this subject, than they might at first sight suppose. If empiricism be permitted—if men insufficiently educated be recognized as possessing the right to heal the sick—if, in a word, this community will rest satisfied with the present degraded condition of Medicine, the fault is certainly with the people. It becomes the imperative duty of the citizens seriously to meditate on this subject. If no other consideration will urge them forward, let their pride impel them to action. This is a great and prosperous city, and, from its situation, must necessarily become one of the most prominent in the world. Here, we have wealth, talent, industry—and, I would add, that every thing is found to flourish save Medicine.

The city of Philadelphia, the last winter, registered 600\* medical students. It is calculated that each pu-

\* The present session of 1835—6, shows an accession to the number of medical students in Philadelphia which affords a strong illustration of the correctness of the position I have assumed in this lecture. It has already been stated that Jefferson Medical College registers 367 bona fide students. The University of Pennsylvania has matriculated 382. These estimates are given on undoubted authority. Philadelphia, then, at this moment, has 749 students attending lectures in her two colleges. The amount of money expended by these gentlemen, will go far to alleviate the sufferings of the needy at this inclement season. This money is circulated generally through the poorer classes of society—and it is in this way that the poor are comparatively so much better provided for in Philadelphia than they are in our own city. The students in Philadelphia, at the average we have taken, will cause to circulate through a most deserving, though humble class of citizens, the handsome sum of \$299,600 during the winter. How many hearts will be gladdened, and what bitter anguish allayed by this amount of money—at a season, too, when poverty presses hard upon its victims! There is one class of the community—a class eliciting the sympathy of every manly heart—most peculiarly benefited during the winter season by the medical students in

pil expends, during the four months' lectures, \$400. According to this estimate, Philadelphia was benefited \$240,000 by her two medical schools. The College in this city numbered 130 students—multiply this by 400, and we shall see that, while Philadelphia received the handsome sum of \$240,000, the great city of New York could boast of but \$52,000 as the product of her school. Now, if we calculate upon time at the present average, we shall find that Philadelphia, in ten years, will receive \$2,400,000 from her Medical Class, whilst New York will have only \$520,000. It may be urged that this is only a calculation of dollars and cents, and has nothing to do with Science. I am ready to admit the truth of the position—but, on the other hand, I contend that, if, by a change in the mode of governing our Medical Institutions, we can succeed in adding, in the course of ten years, the sum of \$2,400,000 to the gross receipts of this city, the obligation for us to do so is imperative. New

Philadelphia: I allude to the great number of respectable widows, whom reverses of fortune have compelled to keep boarding houses. Thus we see there are advantages resulting from a crowded class, other than those directly connected with Science; and I think I speak the language of thousands, when I state that those advantages would be most heartily welcomed here.

The Medical College of this city—the foster institution of the Regents—protected by legislative power, and sustained by the influence of party politics—presents to the scientific world a most imposing catalogue of students. Yes! we of New York are struggling bravely with our sister city—we have the vantage-ground, but victory belongs not to us. I might as well inform the public of the exact number of pupils attending our great State College, situated as it is in the largest, most prosperous, and attractive city on this western continent. I doubt much whether the intelligence will be communicated through any other channel. On 21st December, 1835, ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN students had matriculated. At the same date there were SEVEN HUNDRED AND FORTY-NINE registered in Philadelphia. Shame, gentlemen! shame!

York enjoys advantages for a Medical College which Philadelphia never can possess—and we only require proper legislation to enable us to build up a school which, in a short period, would be the first in the country. The materials are here—they only need working up, and, my word for it, New York would soon retrieve her standing.

I am well aware the idea is prevalent that all effort to bring about a change will be unavailing. It has been repeatedly hinted to me, that no good can possibly result from the discussion of this question—that it is calculated to generate bad feeling, and create dissensions among the members of the Faculty. That it will create bad feeling I have no doubt, and that dissensions must necessarily arise I well know—but I can see nothing in either of these objections to deter me from my present course. I myself entertain great hopes that we shall be enabled to establish a system of Medical Education by which our character will be redeemed, and the cause of science subserved. All that is necessary for this purpose, is to make a lever of public opinion, and our object is accomplished. Bring the subject fairly before the people—place it in its true light—demonstrate beyond all quibble the urgent necessity there is for a change in our medical laws. Let all your energies be directed to the *agitation* of this subject—continue *agitators* until you have convinced the public you have reason on your side—and then you will have cause to glory in the great moral influence you will have brought to bear on this interesting subject.

It may be that my views are altogether erroneous—the profession in this city may, peradventure, be in a



most flourishing condition—and the College in Barclay street may be in a vastly different state from what I have represented. If I am wrong, it remains for those who think me so to point out my error.\* If I am right—if I have stated facts—it is then the duty of those more wise than myself to determine upon the propriety of doing something to resuscitate our medical character. I should be sorry to slander this community. If I know myself, I should be among the first to resent an insult offered the profession. If I have wandered in my argument from facts, I am guilty of slander, and should be held accountable. If there be an individual here who thinks my assertions unfounded, let him convince me by argument that I have done injustice to any man, or any set of men, and I will cheerfully atone for my fault by a public apology.

———“*Si cui videor non justus, inulto  
Dicere, quæ sentit, permitto.*”

I have no feeling in the question which now engages us, other than that arising from an ardent desire to see our profession placed on high and honorable ground. My wish is to allow every man to reap the fruits of his own industry—to give the student reared in poverty the same privileges, the same opportunity to elevate himself in his profession, as are extended to those born in more affluent circumstances. In brief, let merit alone determine the success of every man who aspires after distinction.

These are my views, and I think my conduct so far will prove how sincerely I cherish them.

\* If any gentleman should attempt to controvert my positions after this lecture is before the public, the only request I have to make is, that he may do so under his own name.



In appearing before you as a public lecturer, I wish you to understand that I do so on my own responsibility. I ask the assistance of no man—I do not court the patronage of the great and influential—nor will I condescend to wear honors which I cannot prove I deserve. As a public teacher, I am your property—it is your business to see how far you will be justified in listening to what I may have to unfold. Remember, gentlemen, it is a duty you owe yourselves, your country, and your profession, to become morally satisfied of the competency of your instructors, before you place yourselves under their guidance. I shall not shrink from the rigor of your criticism—I exhort you to judge for yourselves. Do not, I beseech you, suffer your judgments to be biased by the ardent representations of friends—or your minds poisoned by the trick and subterfuge of enemies.

I am not unmindful of the difficulties I shall have to encounter—nor am I ignorant that, as an independent teacher, I shall necessarily incur the ill will of those whose policy it is to circumscribe the right of lecturing to a contracted circle. My energy shall increase with the opposition arrayed against me—and in proportion as obstacles thicken around me, in the same ratio precisely will I labor to overcome them. It will be my aim to instruct you—it will be your duty, at the close of the session, to examine how far I have succeeded in my object. If, after a rigid scrutiny, you find me deficient, fail not to proclaim your verdict to the world. If I cannot succeed in obtaining your confidence by my own unaided efforts, I will gladly retire from the field.

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